



**DARK  
HORSE  
COMICS**

ORCHID

**12**

# ORCHID™

**TOM MORELLO  
SCOTT HEPBURN  
DAN JACKSON**

KNOW YOUR ROLE

*Mc*



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**DAN JACKSON**



# ORCHID

LETTERS BY  
**NATE PIEKOS OF BLAMBOT®**

COVER BY  
**MASSIMO CARNEVALE**

Following the deaths of her mother and brother, Orchid has nothing left to lose. Hell bent on revenge, she forms an unlikely trio with a Shadow Rebel, Simon, and a mysterious warrior, Opal. When the battle to reclaim their lives and their world had just begun, Opal—revealed as the rebel martyr General China—was killed. Driven to despair by the death of her surrogate mother, Orchid tried on Opal's mask . . . and found she could call upon the great power it possessed. Hope, albeit minimal, was rekindled.

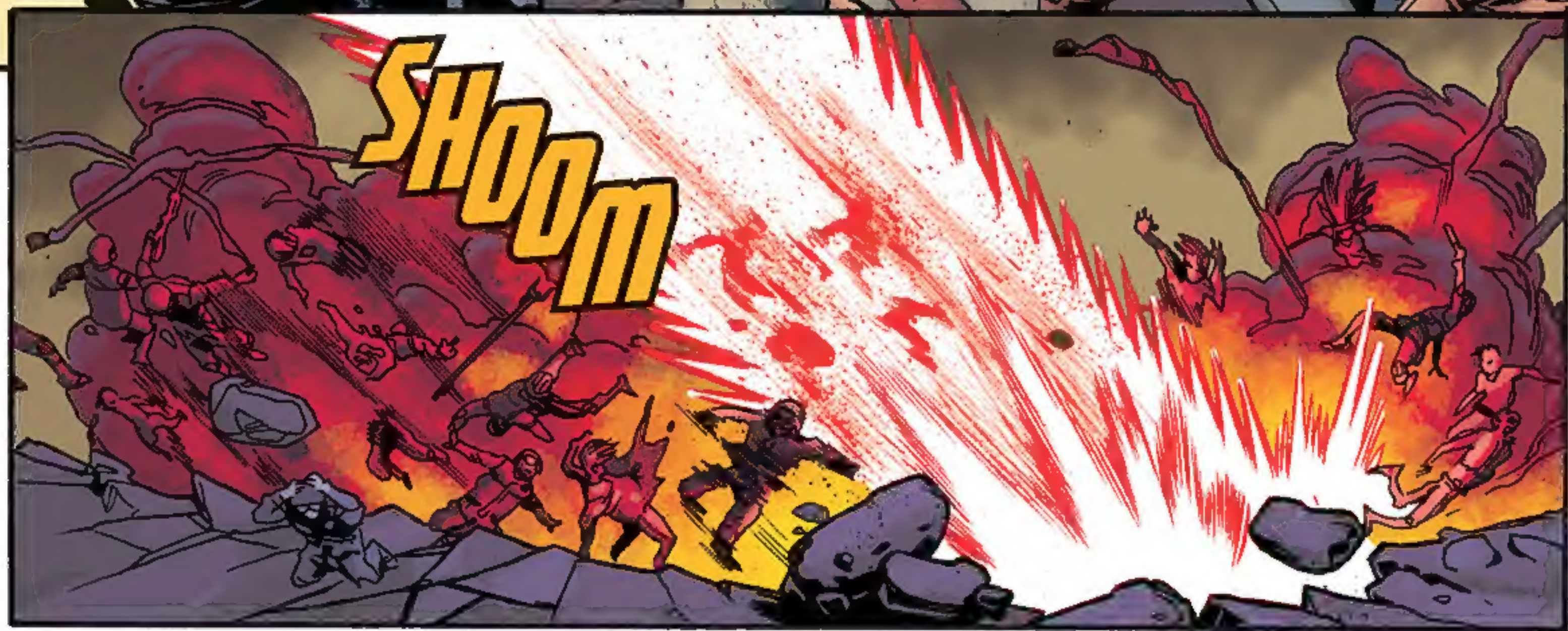
Now, the former prostitute turned rebel leader has rallied the oppressed Bridge People for a final assault on the vicious dictator Tomo Wolfe. The stakes are absolute: freedom or death.

DESIGNER **DAVID NESTELLE** CONSULTING EDITOR **SIERRA HAHN** EDITOR **JIM GIBBONS** PUBLISHER **MIKE RICHARDSON**  
SPECIAL THANKS TO **MICHELE FISHER** AND **DAVE LAND**

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A THOUSAND  
VOICES IN MY HEAD  
STEEL MY WILL.



A THOUSAND  
ARMS...



...SWING MY  
SWORD.



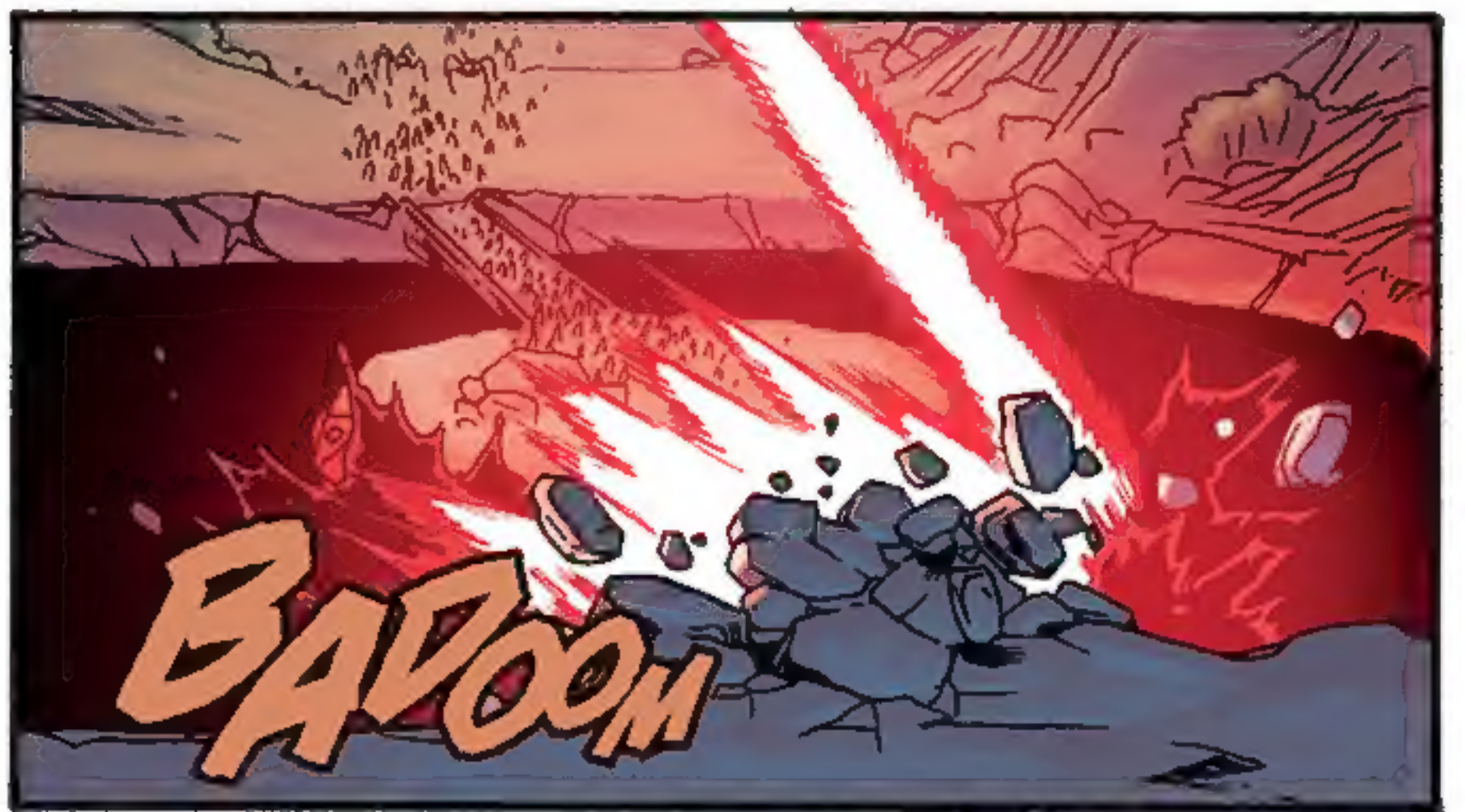
HEEN-  
HEEN-  
NEH-NEH-  
NEH

BUT THERE  
ARE JUST TOO  
MANY OF  
THEM.

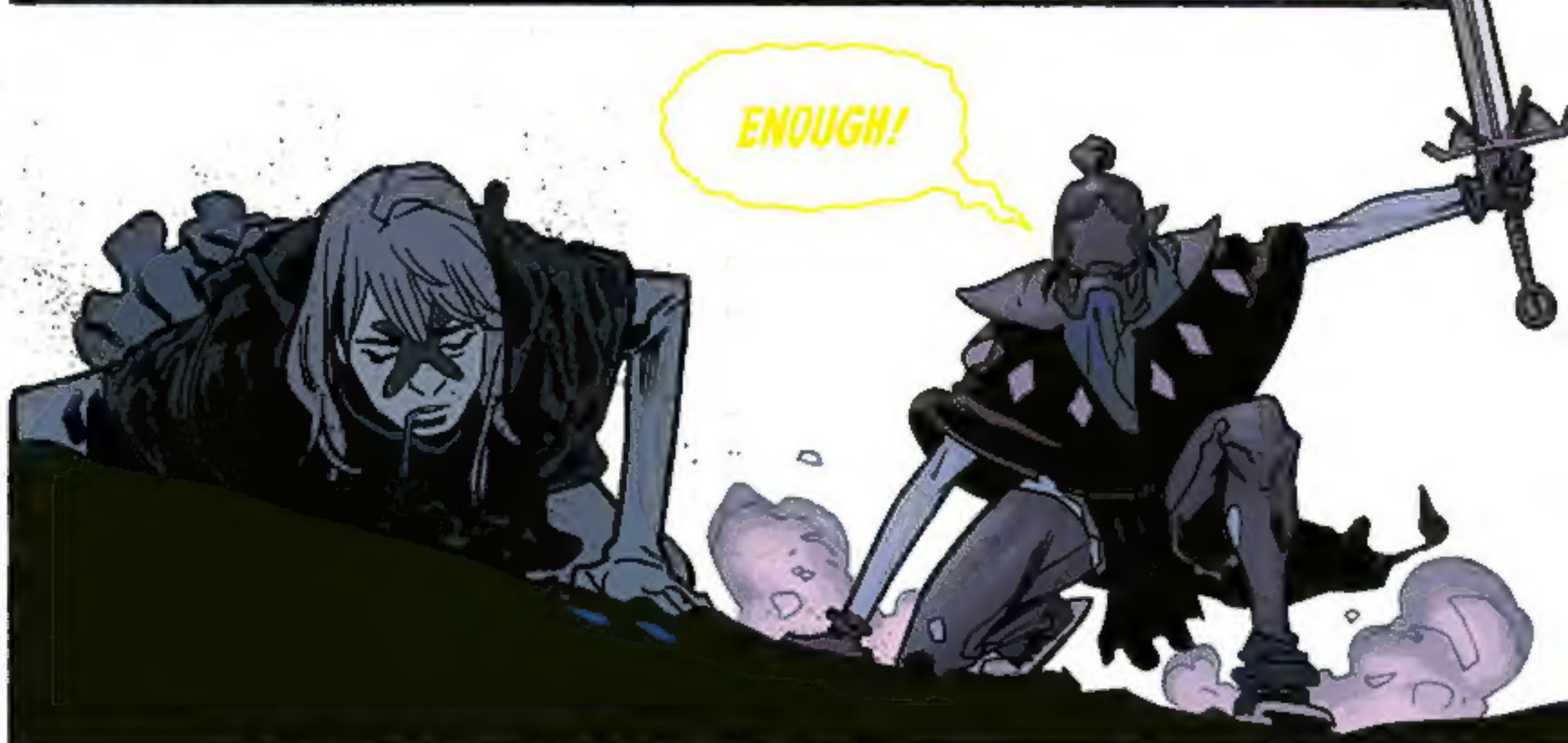
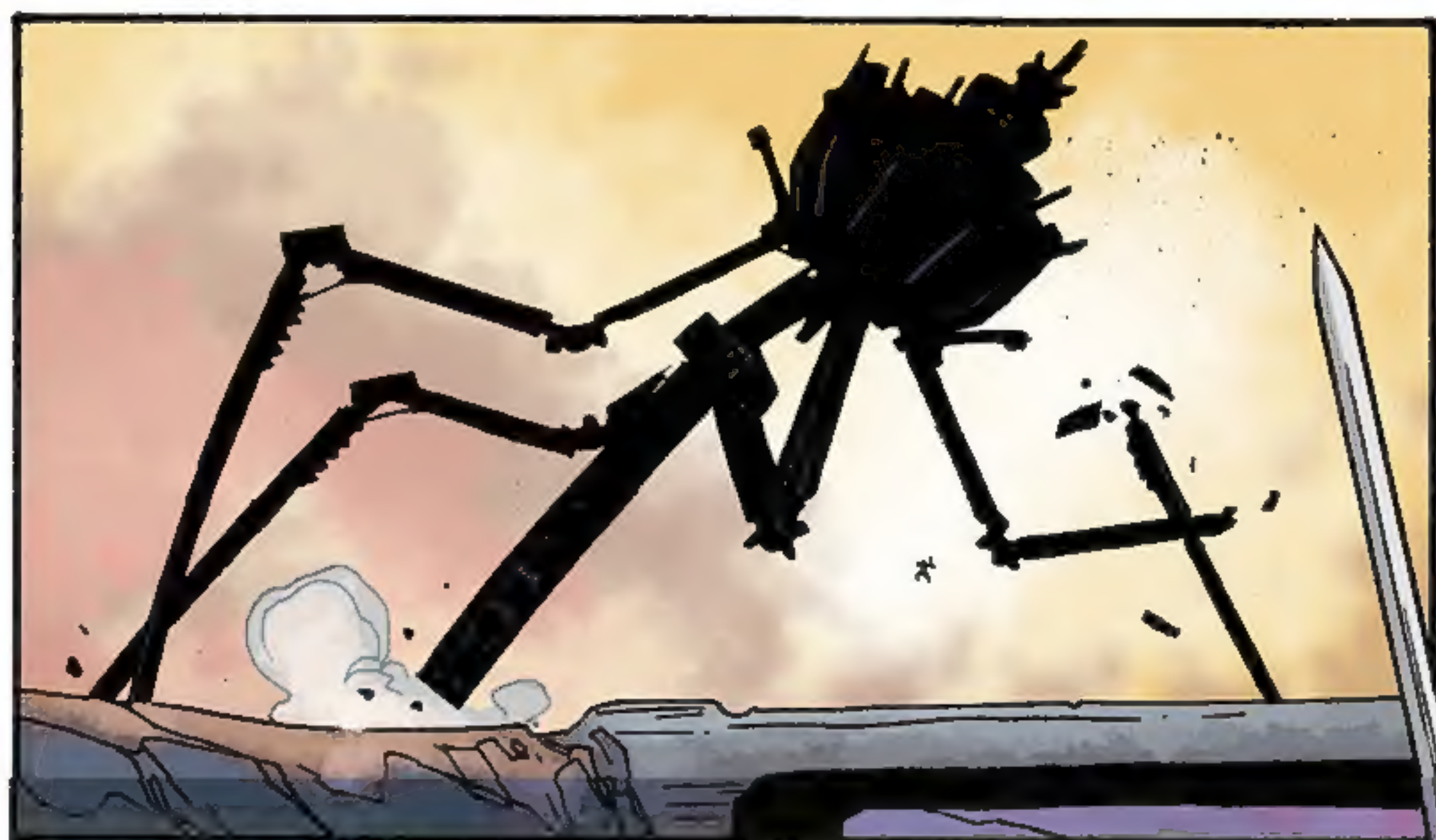




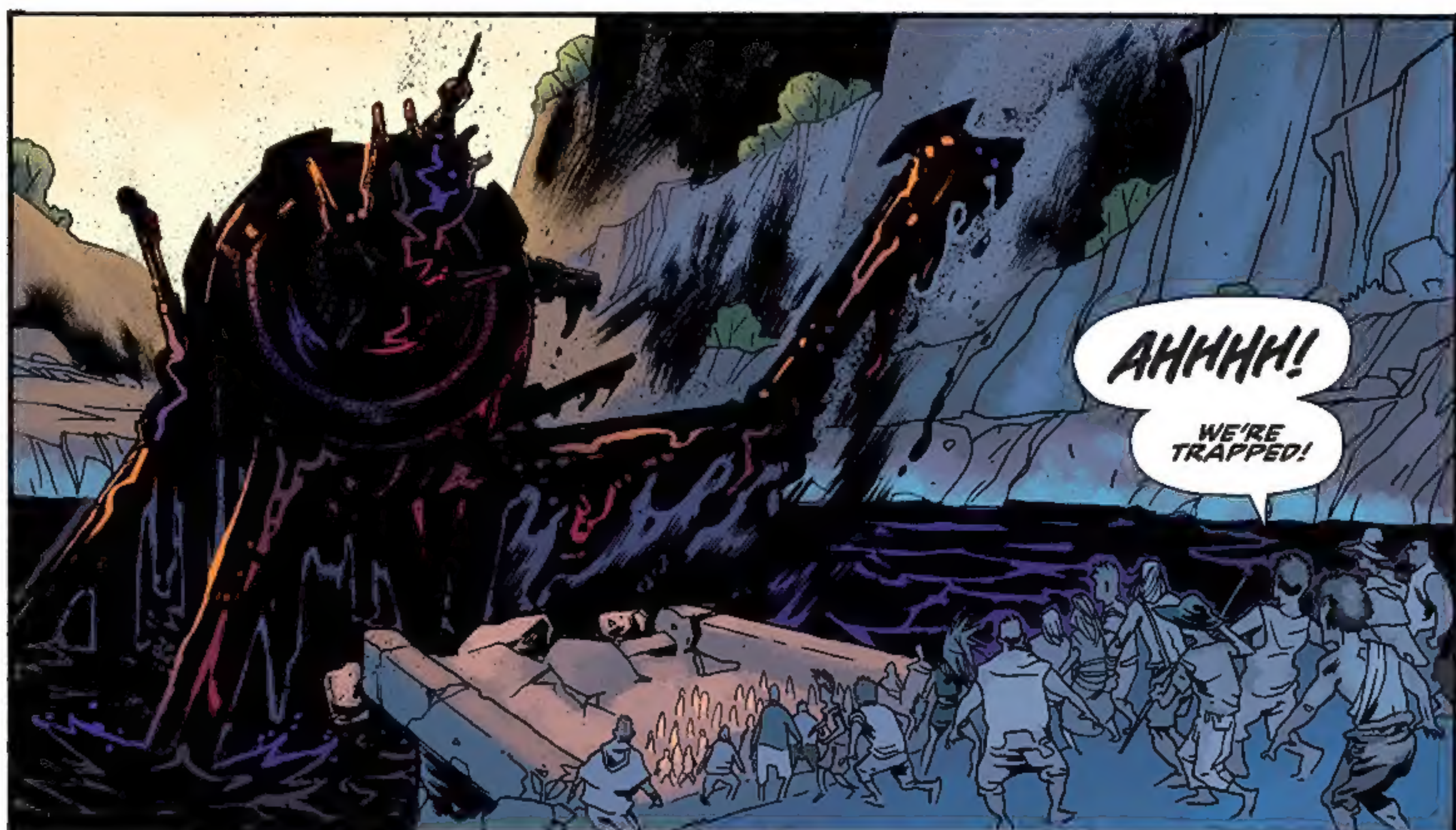




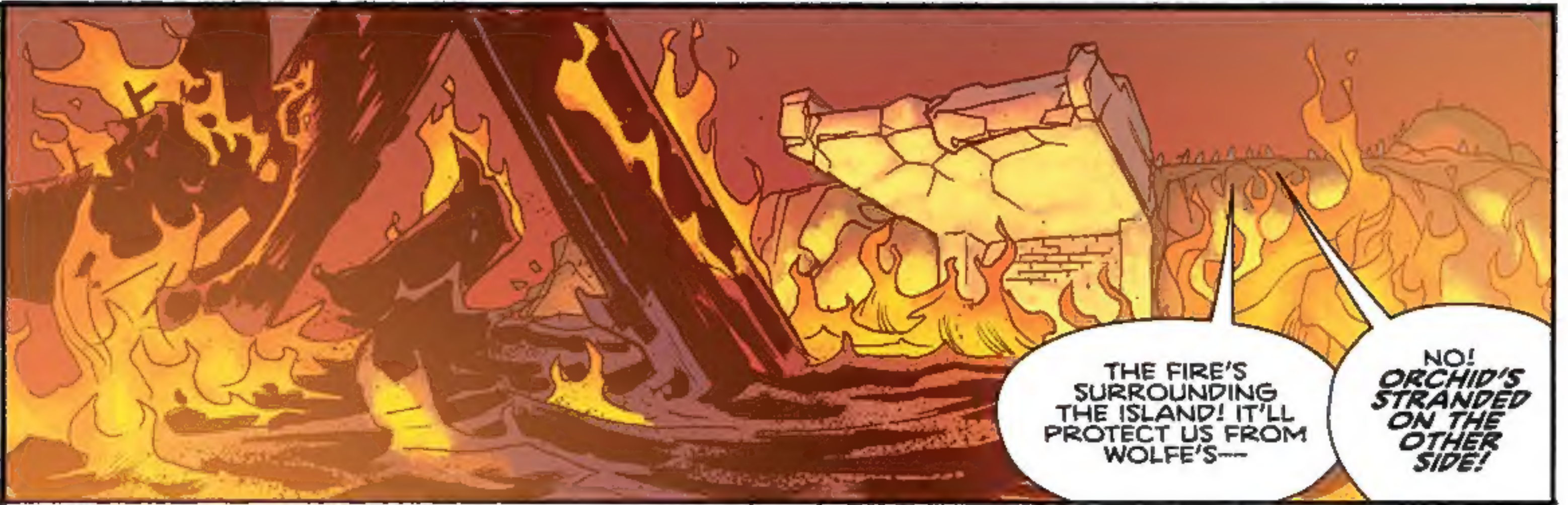




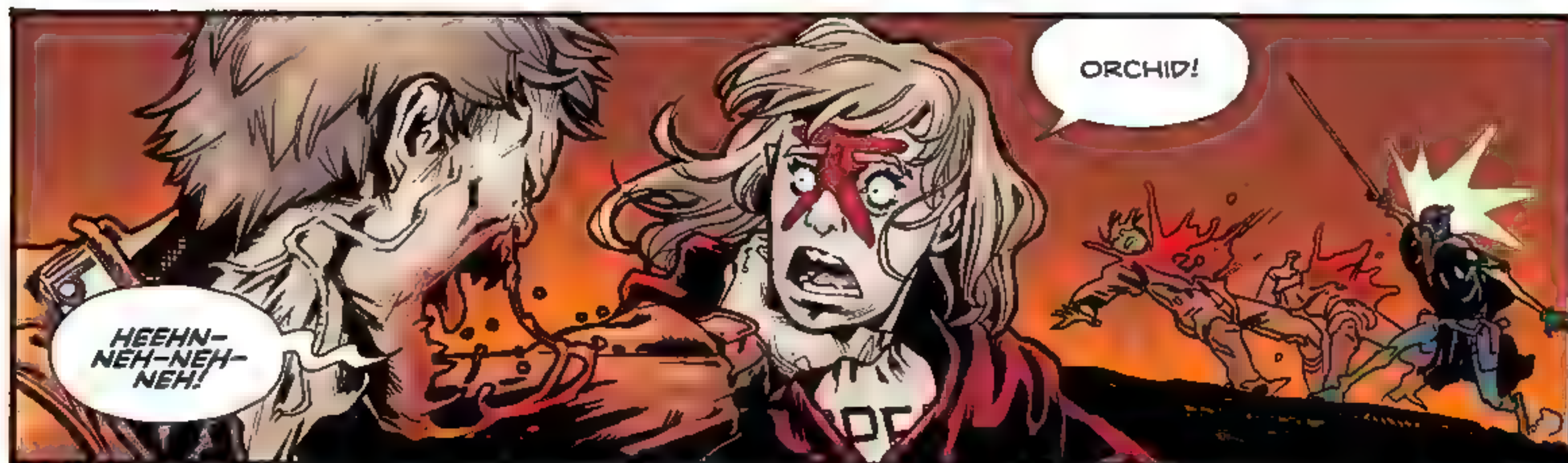




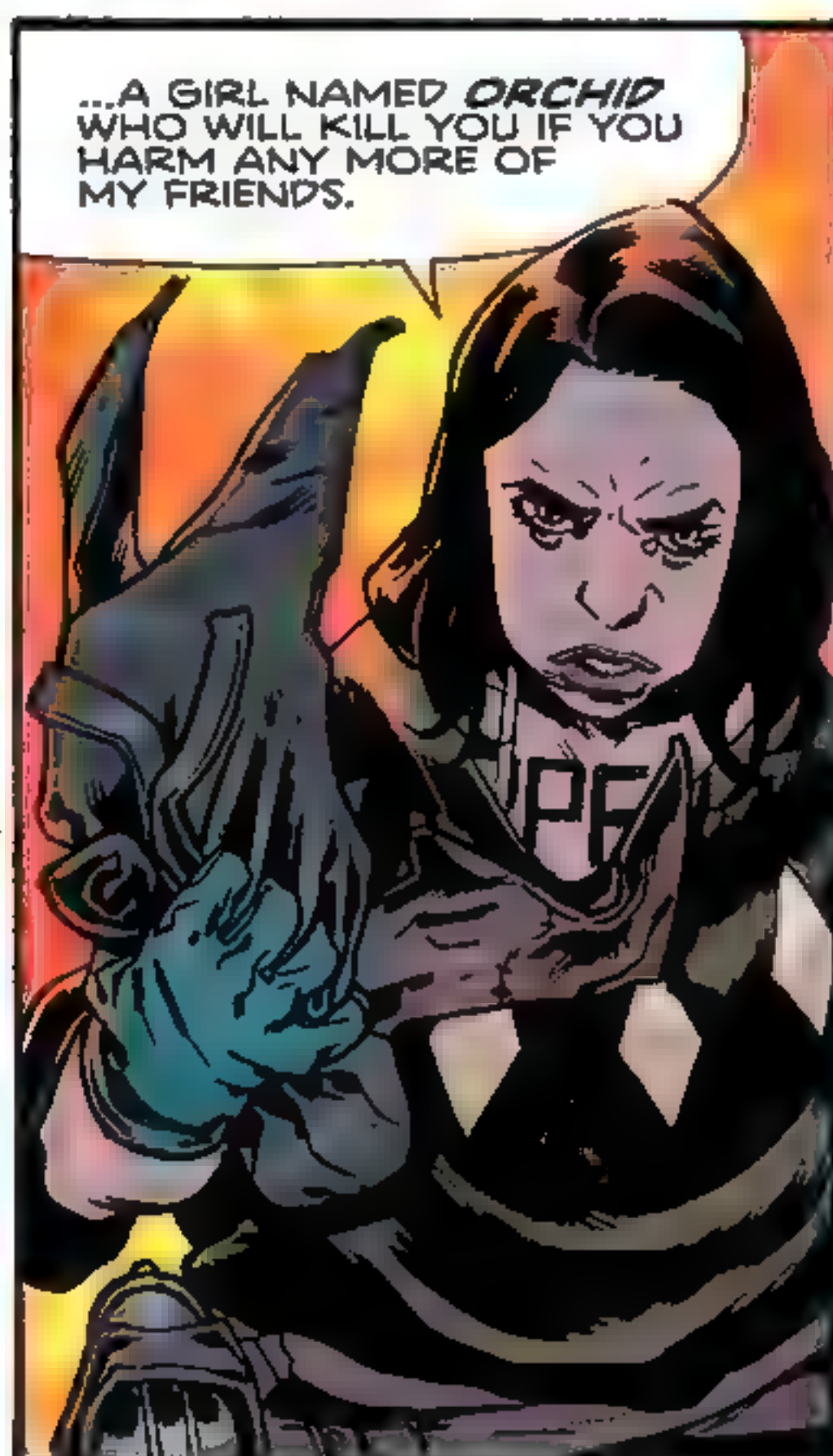














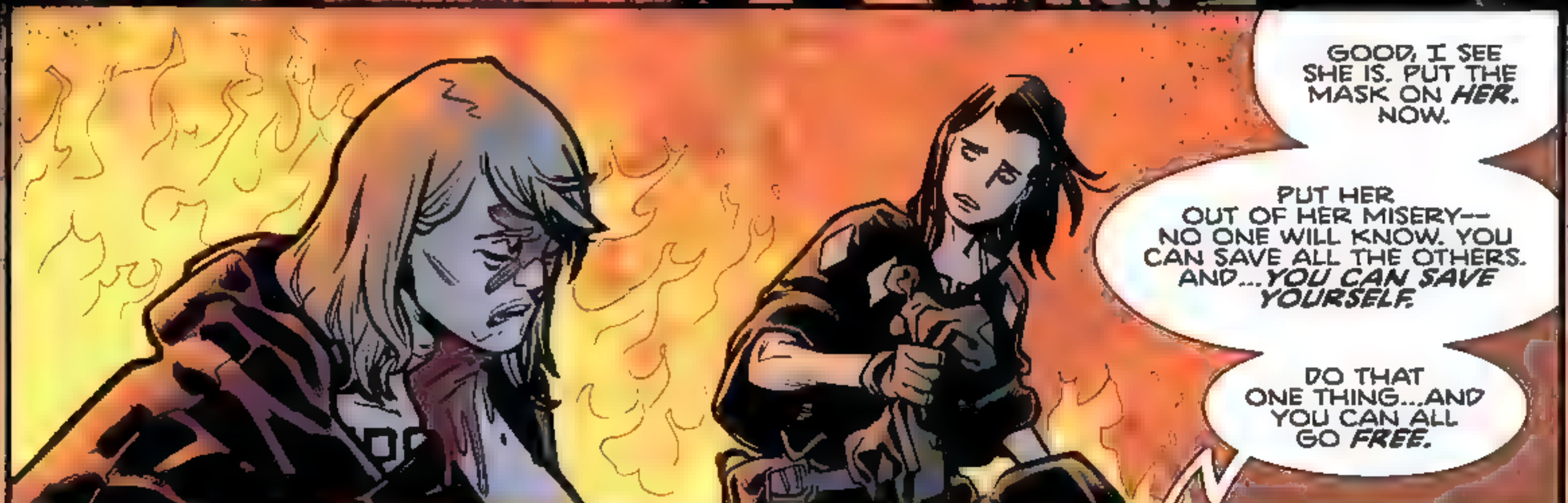


NEVER  
MIND. I AM  
MAKING YOU  
AN *OFFER*.

I AM WILLING  
TO CALL AN *END*  
TO THESE SENSELESS  
HOSTILITIES. I WILL  
SPARE THE LIVES OF  
EVERY MAN, WOMAN,  
AND CHILD ON THE  
BATTLEFIELD. I'LL EVEN  
SPARE *YOUR* LIFE--BUT  
YOU MUST DO ONE  
SMALL THING.

THE  
MASK IS  
FATAL IF  
WORN BY  
ANOTHER.  
SO...

DO TELL  
ME...IS THAT  
POOR SOUL OF  
PARTICULAR  
IMPORTANCE  
TO YOU?




GOOD, I SEE  
SHE IS. PUT THE  
MASK ON *HER*.  
NOW.

PUT HER  
OUT OF HER MISERY--  
NO ONE WILL KNOW. YOU  
CAN SAVE ALL THE OTHERS.  
AND...*YOU CAN SAVE  
YOURSELF*.

DO THAT  
ONE THING...AND  
YOU CAN ALL  
GO *FREE*.



IT'S  
JUST...ONE...  
INNOCENT...  
GIRL.



NEVER! IT'S BETTER  
TO CONQUER *YOURSELF*  
THAN WIN A *THOUSAND*  
BATTLES. *THAT* VICTORY  
IS *MINE*--

YOU WANT  
THIS ACCURSED  
MASK? THEN  
*TAKE IT!* AND  
DO WITH US AS  
YOU WILL!

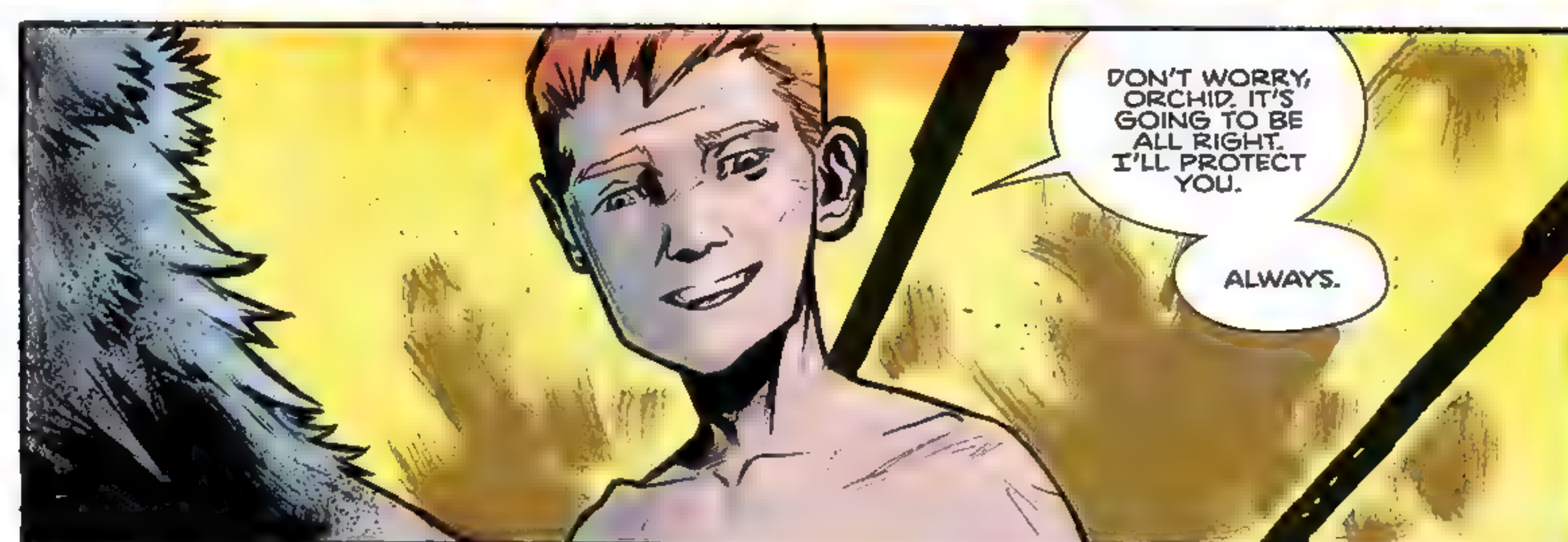
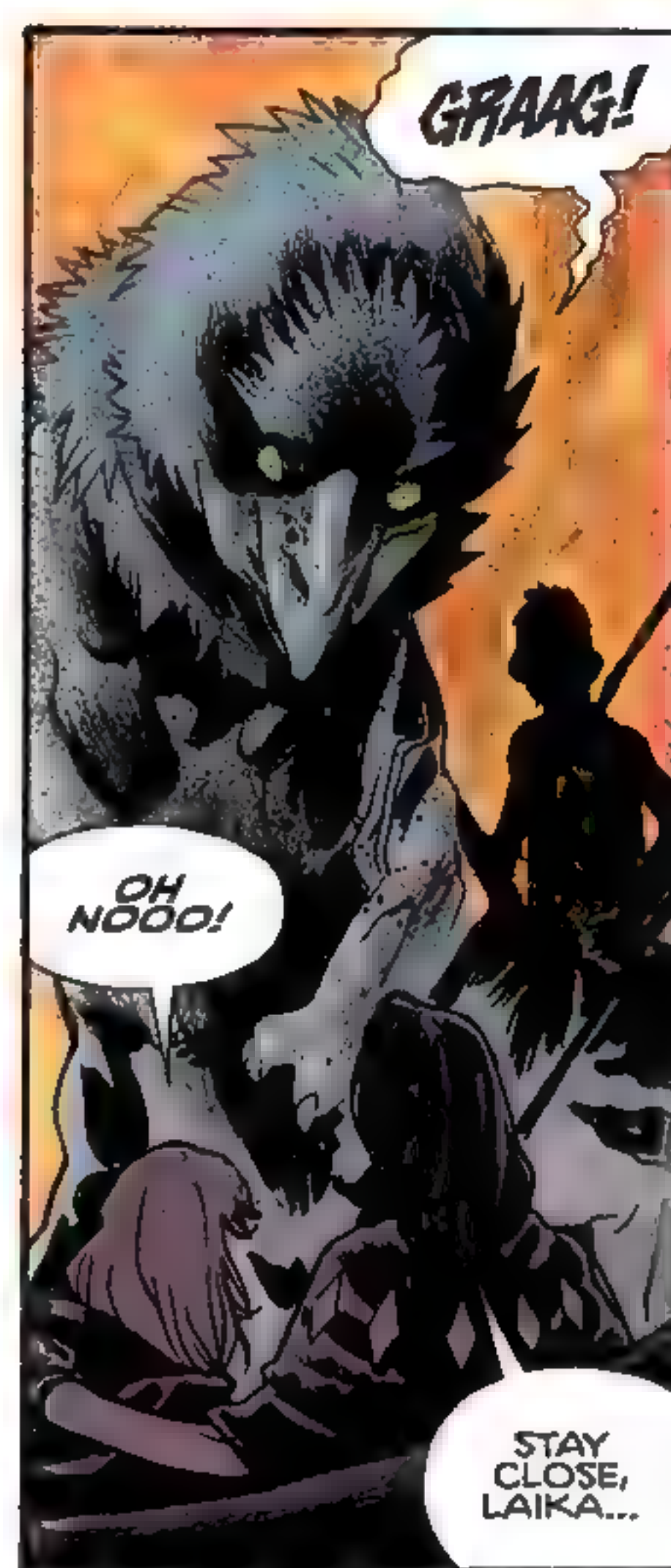








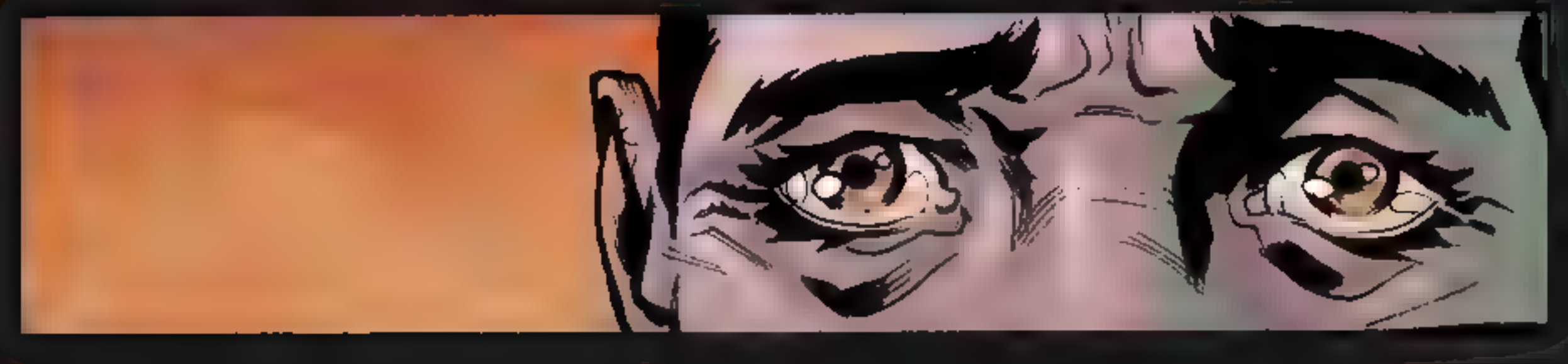
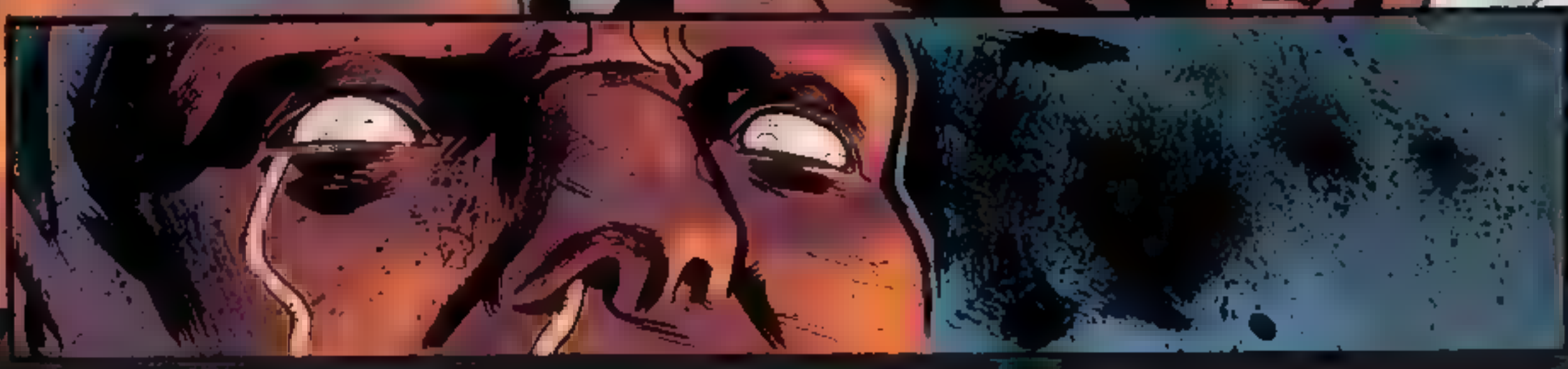




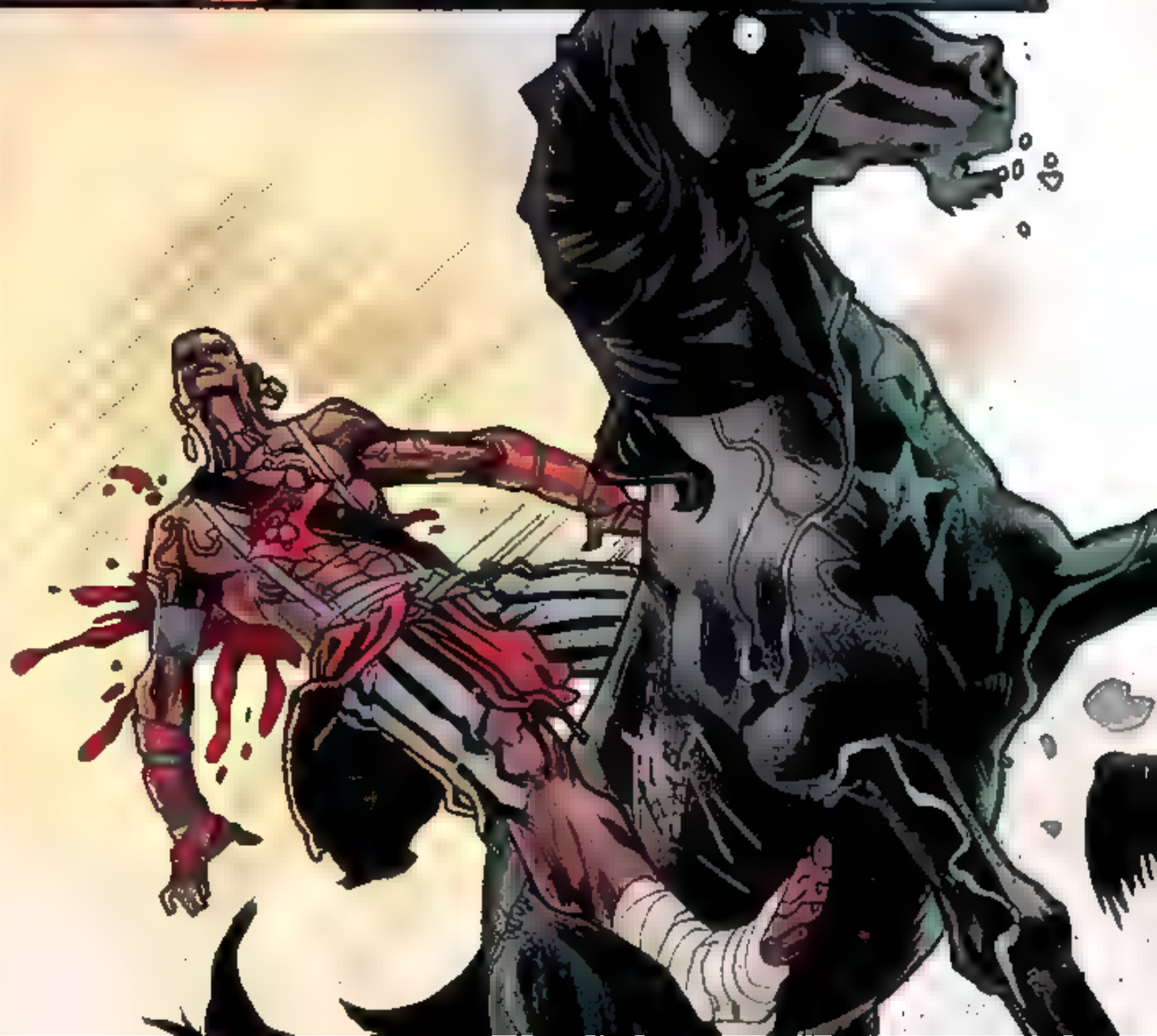
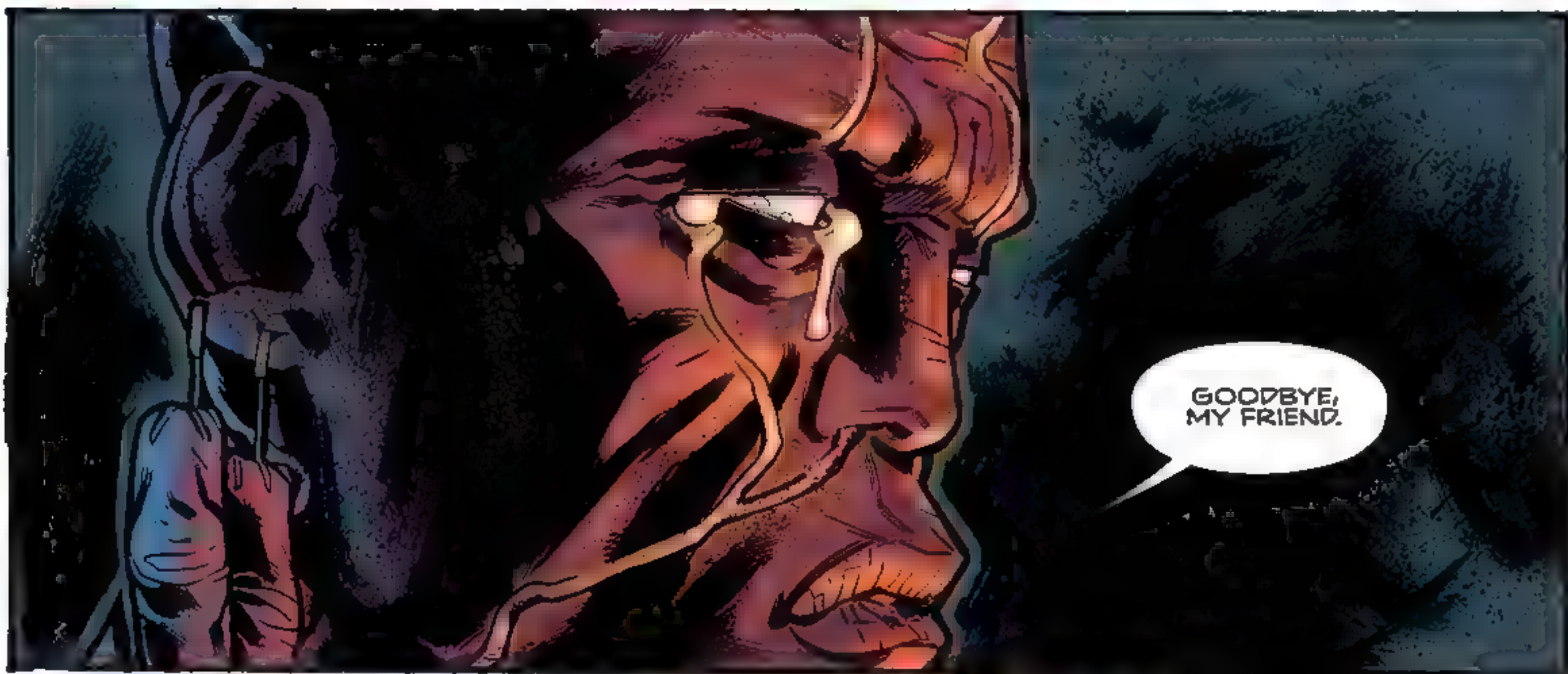
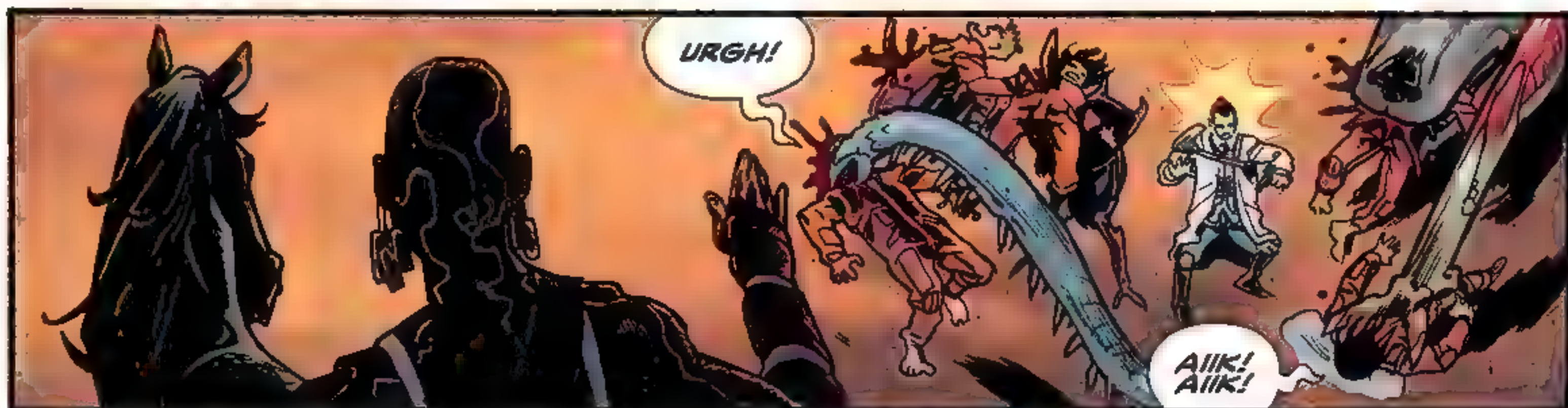




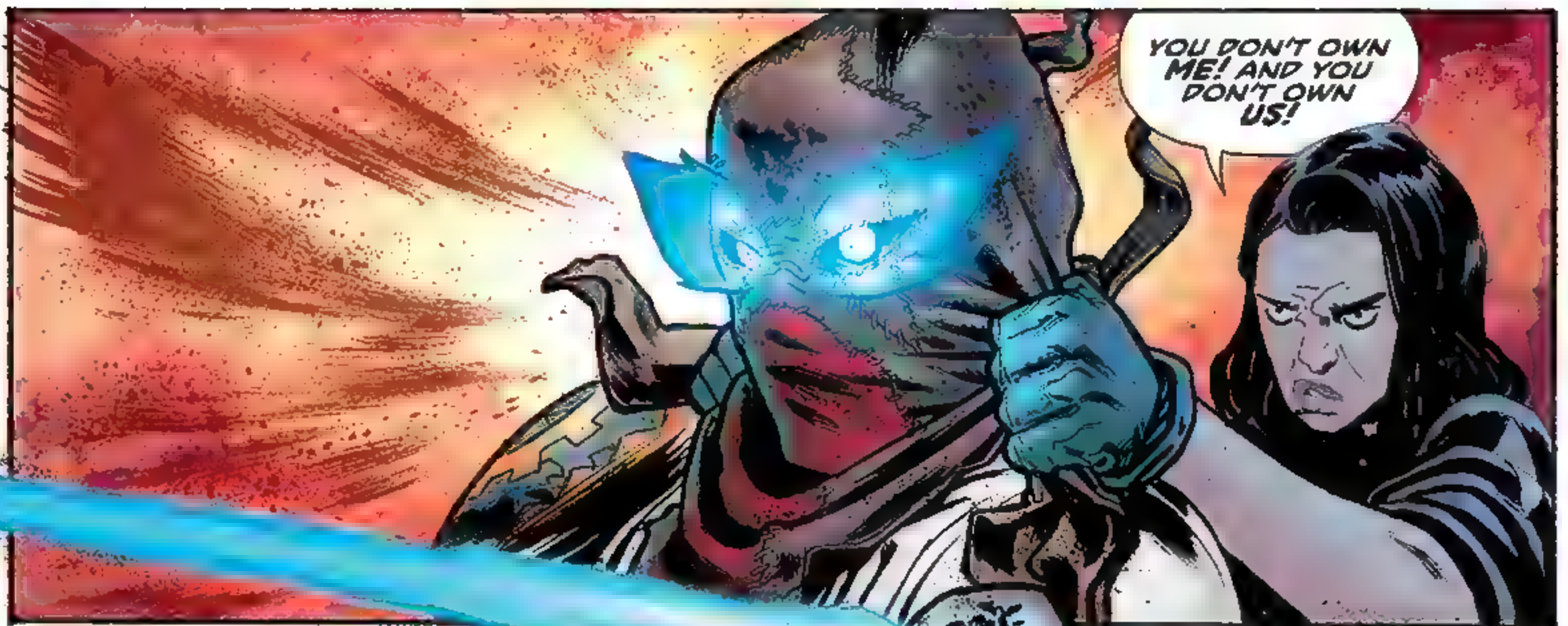
BARRABAS...  
S-STAY BACK!  
STAY BACK!



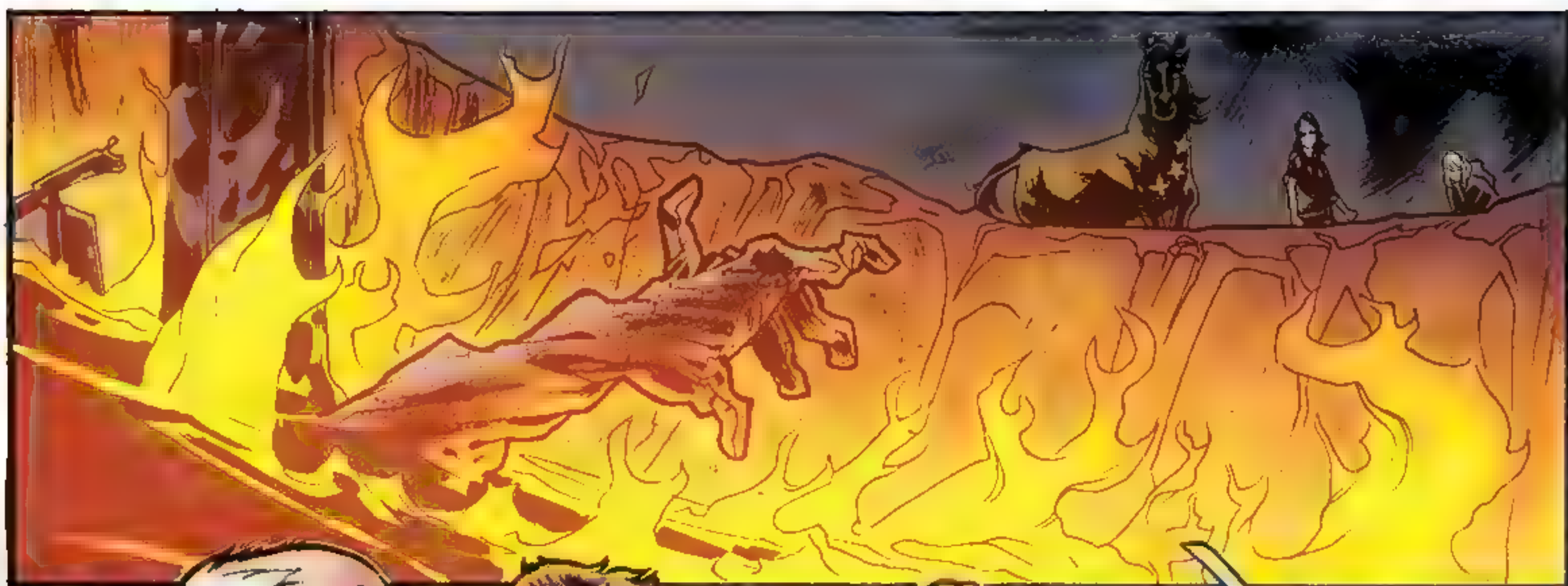
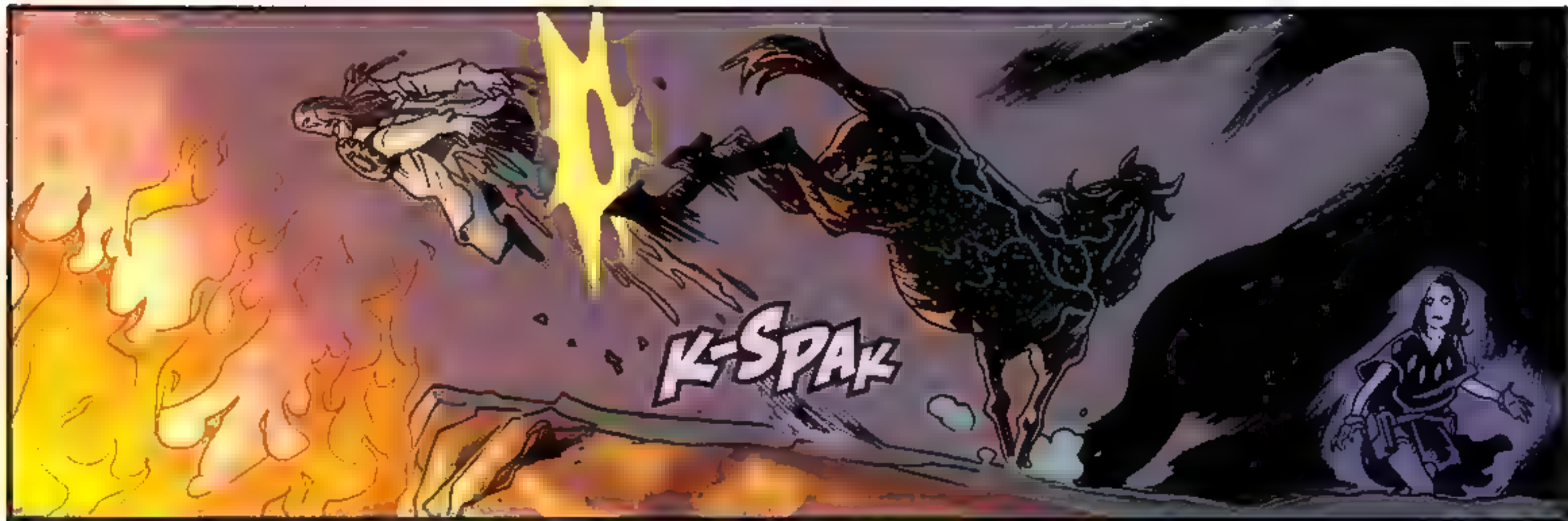




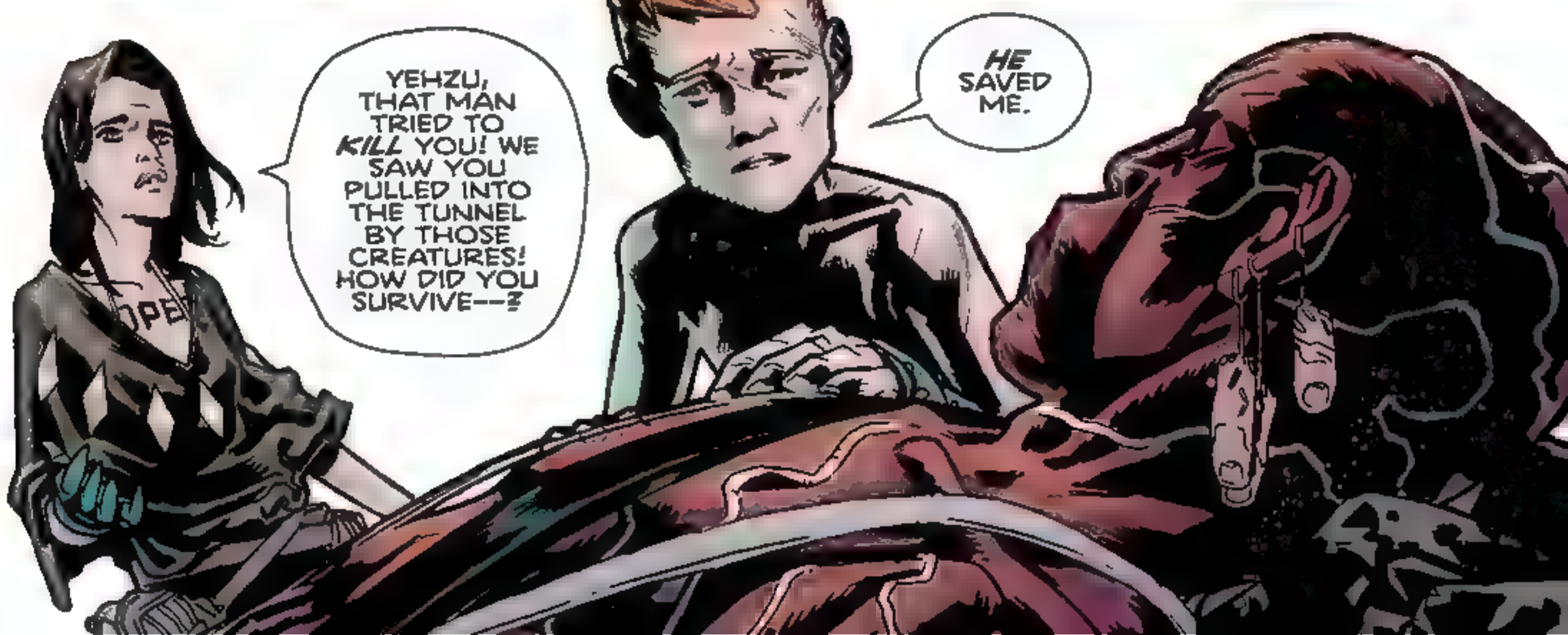
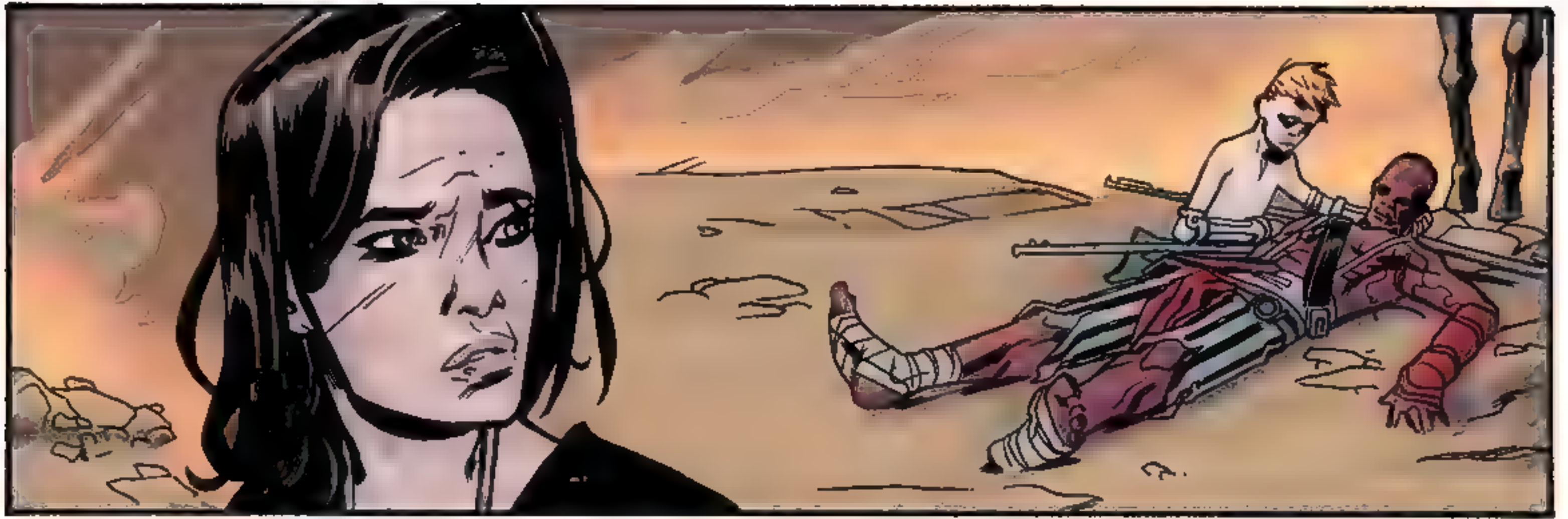




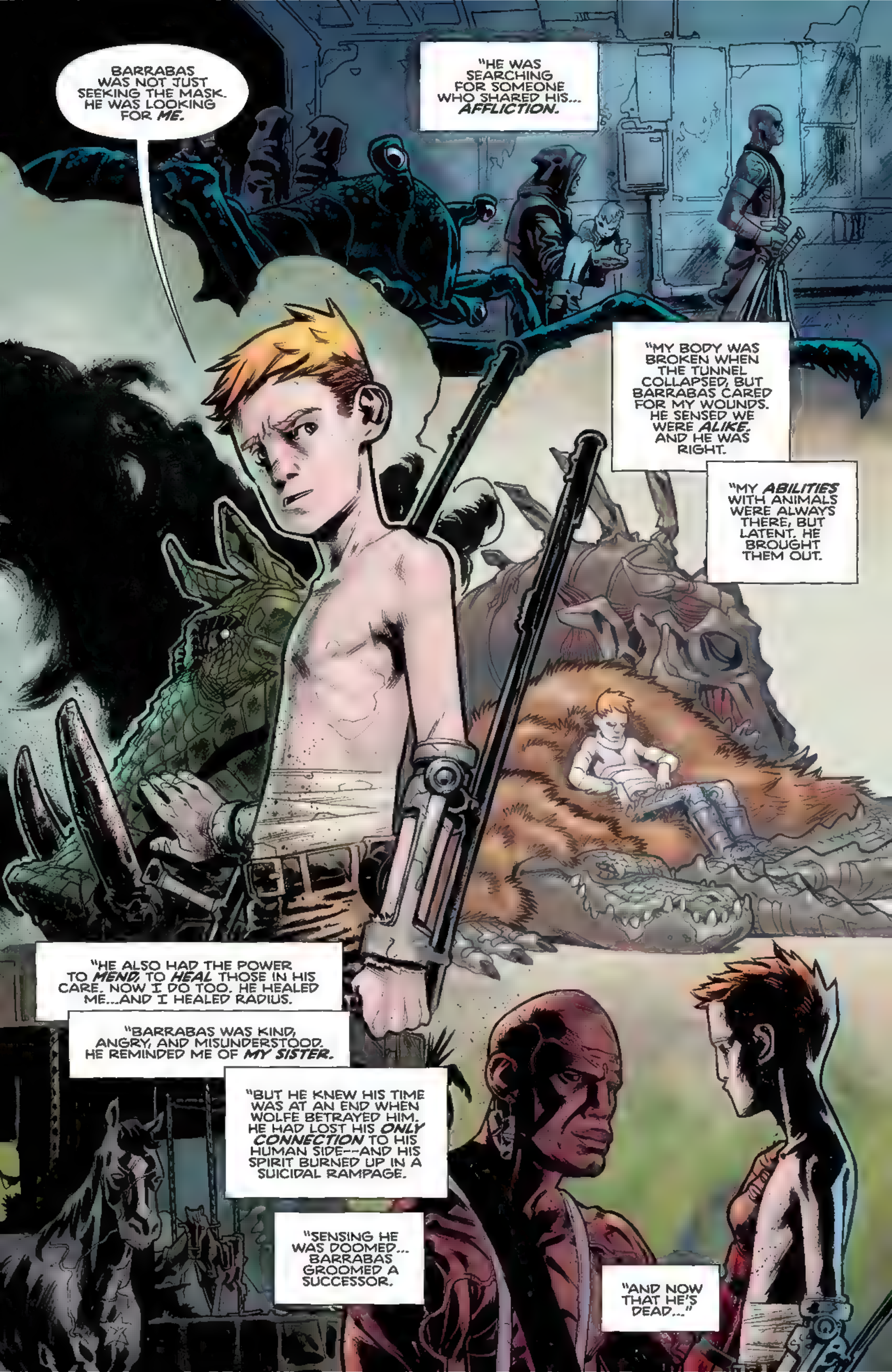












BARRABAS  
WAS NOT JUST  
SEEKING THE MASK.  
HE WAS LOOKING  
FOR ME.

"HE WAS  
SEARCHING  
FOR SOMEONE  
WHO SHARED HIS...  
**AFFLICTION.**

"MY BODY WAS  
BROKEN WHEN  
THE TUNNEL  
COLLAPSED, BUT  
BARRABAS CARED  
FOR MY WOUNDS.  
HE SENSED WE  
WERE **ALIKE**,  
AND HE WAS  
RIGHT.

"MY **ABILITIES**  
WITH ANIMALS  
WERE ALWAYS  
THERE, BUT  
LATENT. HE  
BROUGHT  
THEM OUT.

"HE ALSO HAD THE POWER  
TO **MEND**, TO **HEAL** THOSE IN HIS  
CARE. NOW I DO TOO. HE HEALED  
ME...AND I HEALED RADIUS.

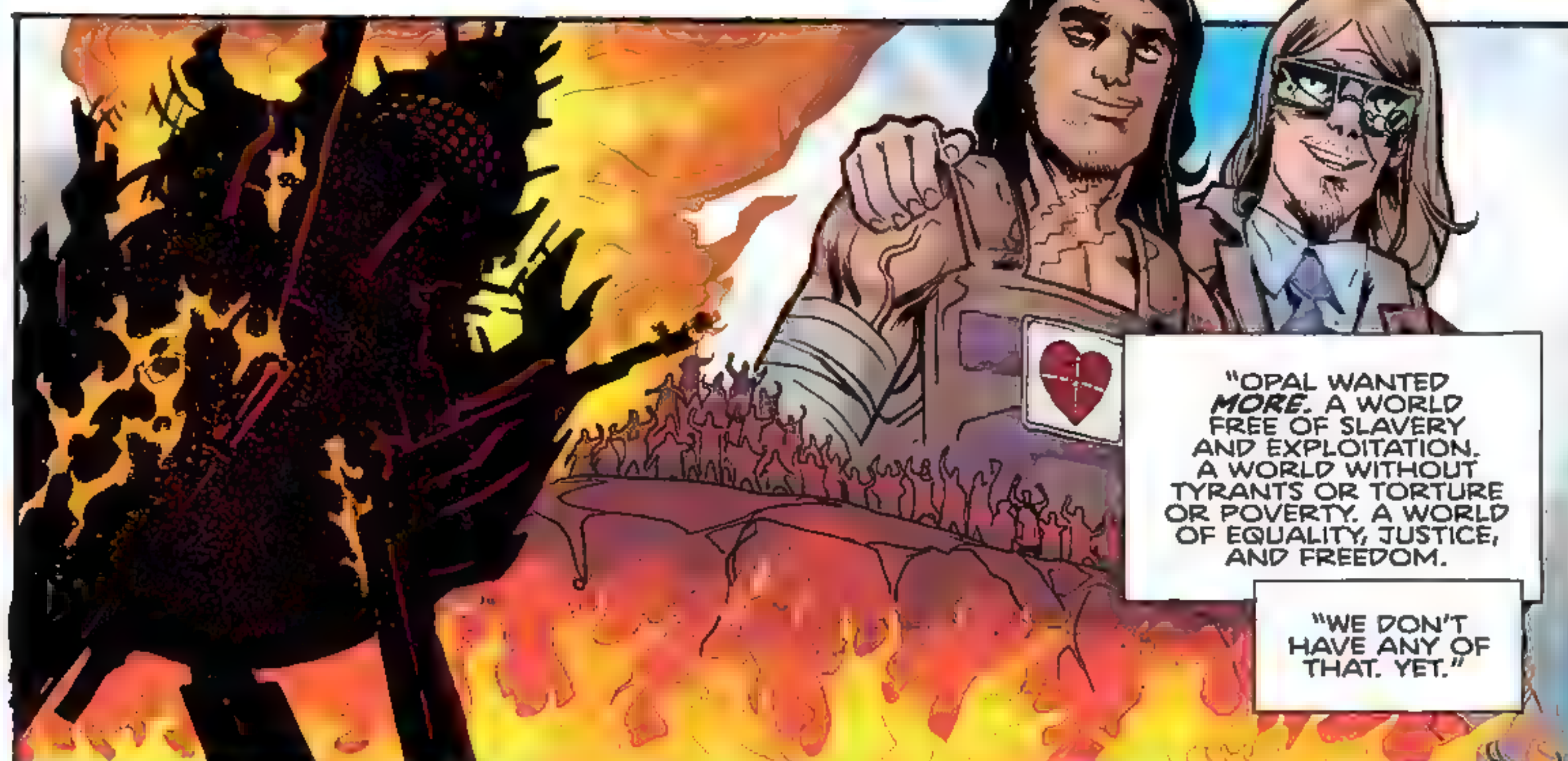
"BARRABAS WAS KIND,  
ANGRY, AND MISUNDERSTOOD.  
HE REMINDED ME OF **MY SISTER**.

"BUT HE KNEW HIS TIME  
WAS AT AN END WHEN  
WOLFE BETRAYED HIM.  
HE HAD LOST HIS **ONLY**  
**CONNECTION** TO HIS  
HUMAN SIDE--AND HIS  
SPIRIT BURNED UP IN A  
SUICIDAL RAMPAGE.

"SENSING HE  
WAS DOOMED...  
BARRABAS  
GROOMED A  
SUCCESSOR.

"AND NOW  
THAT HE'S  
DEAD..."







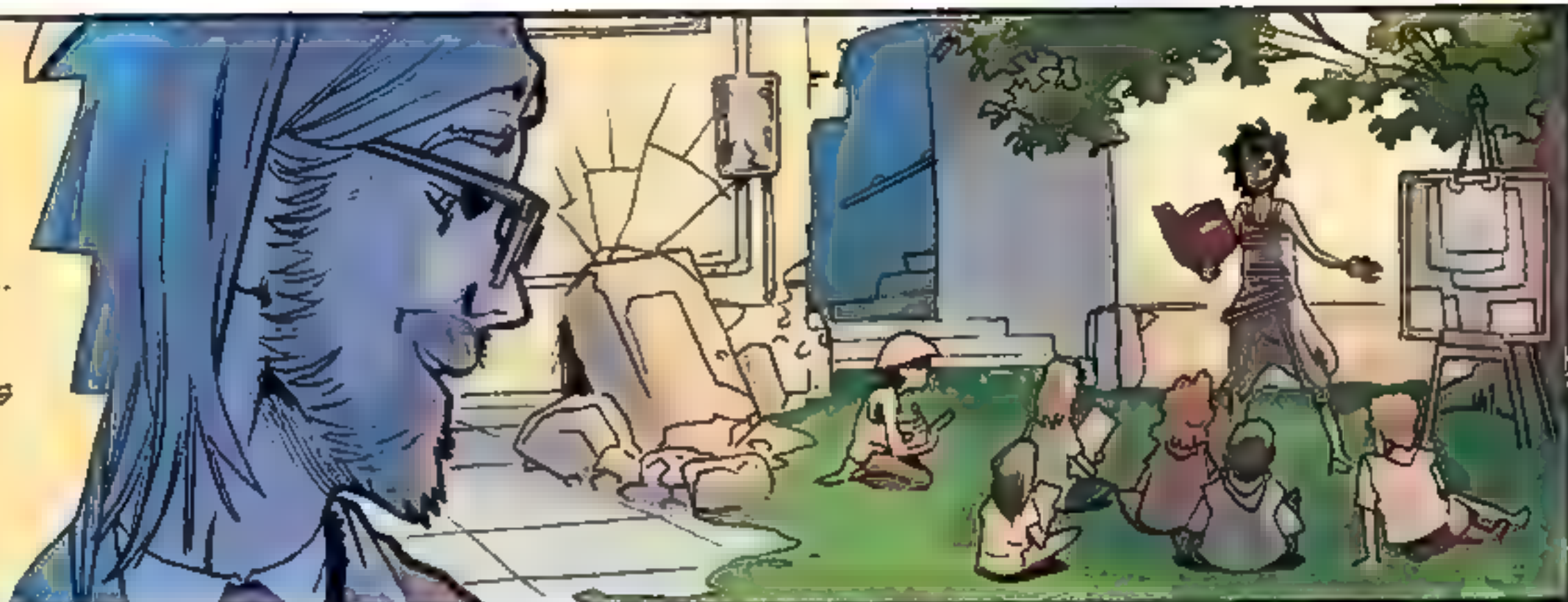
ONE YEAR LATER.

RUINS OF FORTRESS PENUEL.

Of course, many wanted to coronate Orchid the QUEEN of NEW PENUEL. Naturally, smart girl that she is, she'd have none of THAT. She insisted there'd be NO LEADERS at all. None. Can you imagine? And people have finally come around to the notion.



The OPAL SCHOOL OF FREE THOUGHT is thriving. People can READ once again. The youngsters are teaching themselves... and each other. I lent a hand early on, but as there were complaints about my incessant, directionless yammering, I have stepped aside.



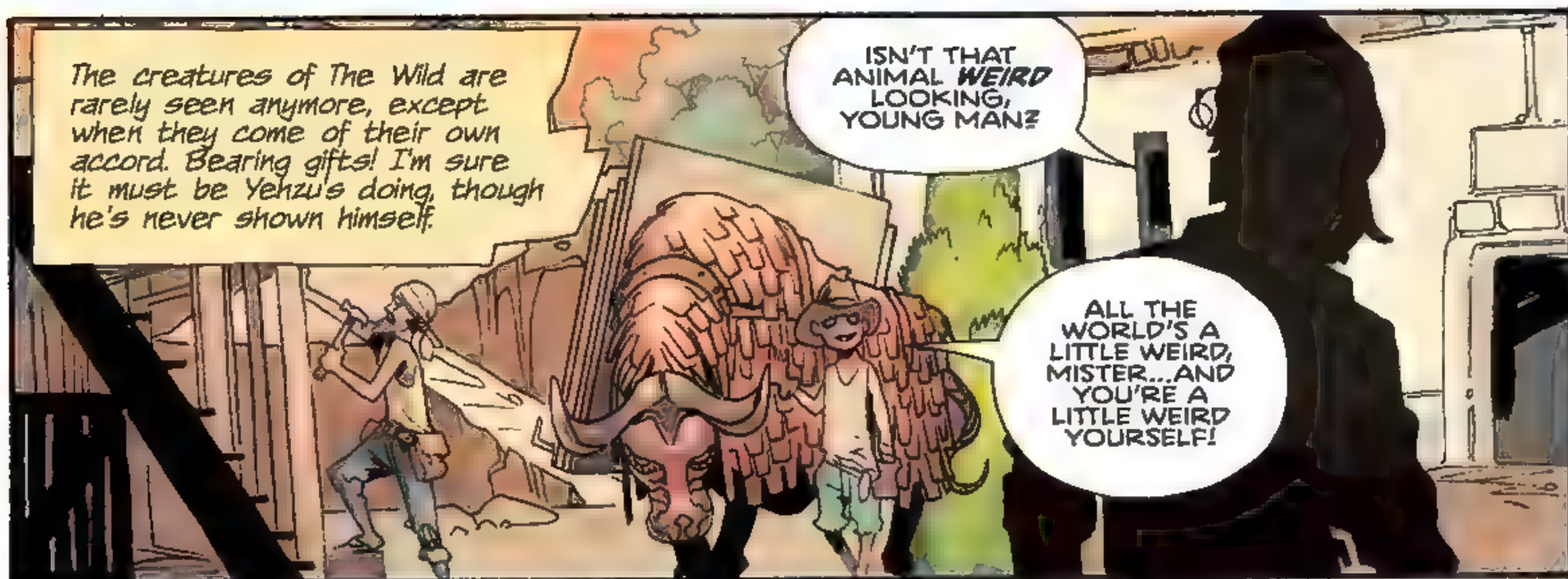
The FREE CLINIC combines the best of Bridge Folk Medicine with our new "book learning." And food, well, that's free now too. Clothes? Sure. Everybody pitches in as best they can.



The creatures of The Wild are rarely seen anymore, except when they come of their own accord. Bearing gifts! I'm sure it must be Yehzus doing, though he's never shown himself.

ISN'T THAT ANIMAL WEIRD LOOKING, YOUNG MAN?

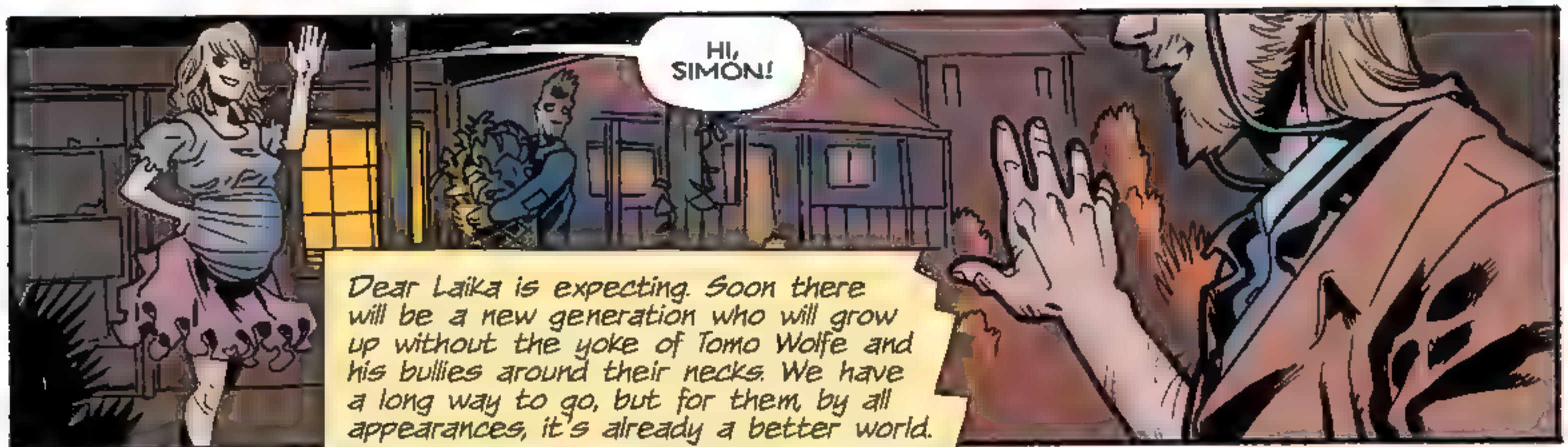
ALL THE WORLD'S A LITTLE WEIRD, MISTER...AND YOU'RE A LITTLE WEIRD YOURSELF!







Now, don't get me wrong. It's not as if everyone always gets along. But when the difficult stuff comes up, we do our best to figure it out. Sometimes LOUDLY.



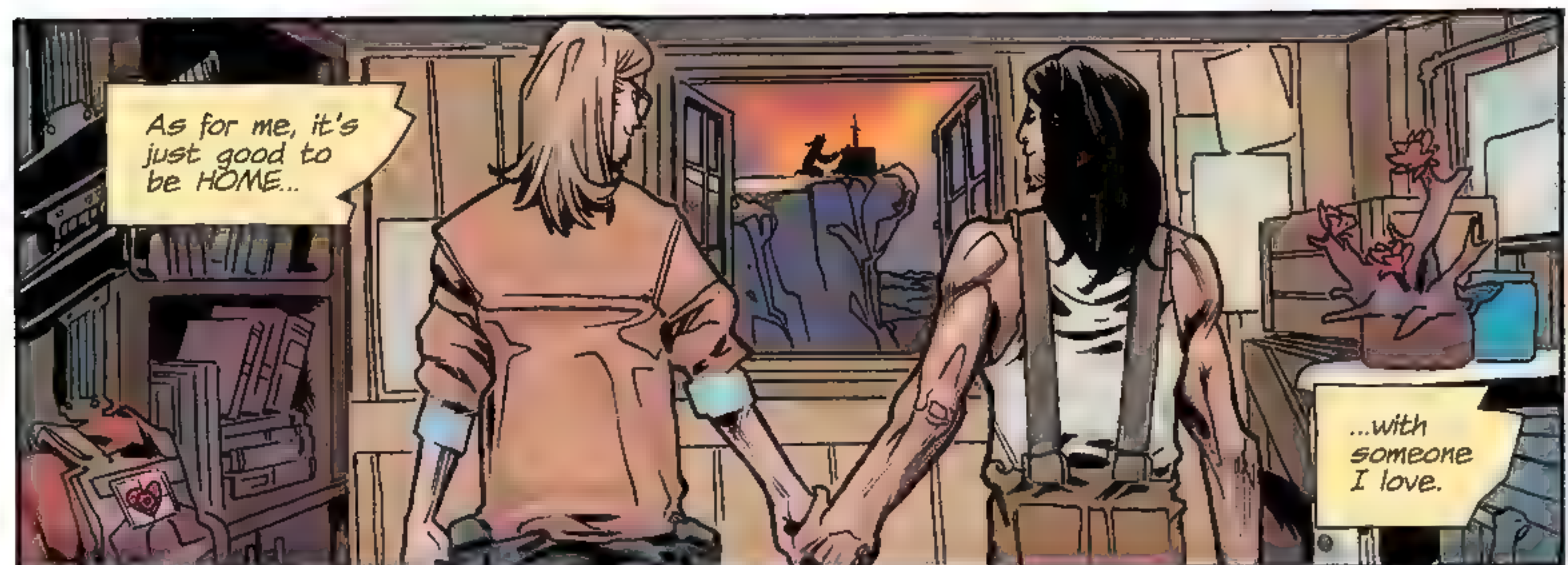
Hi, SIMON!

Dear Laika is expecting. Soon there will be a new generation who will grow up without the yoke of Tomo Wolfe and his bullies around their necks. We have a long way to go, but for them, by all appearances, it's already a better world.



Anzio, of course, never sees what's been done--only what REMAINS TO BE DONE. He works tirelessly for that just society he imagines. And who knows? Maybe one day...

But for him, what remains to be done TONIGHT is COOKING DINNER.



As for me, it's just good to be HOME...

...with someone I love.



As for Orchid, she stays well out of the business and politics of New Penuei. She just LIVES, quietly reclaiming the years the world stripped away from her.

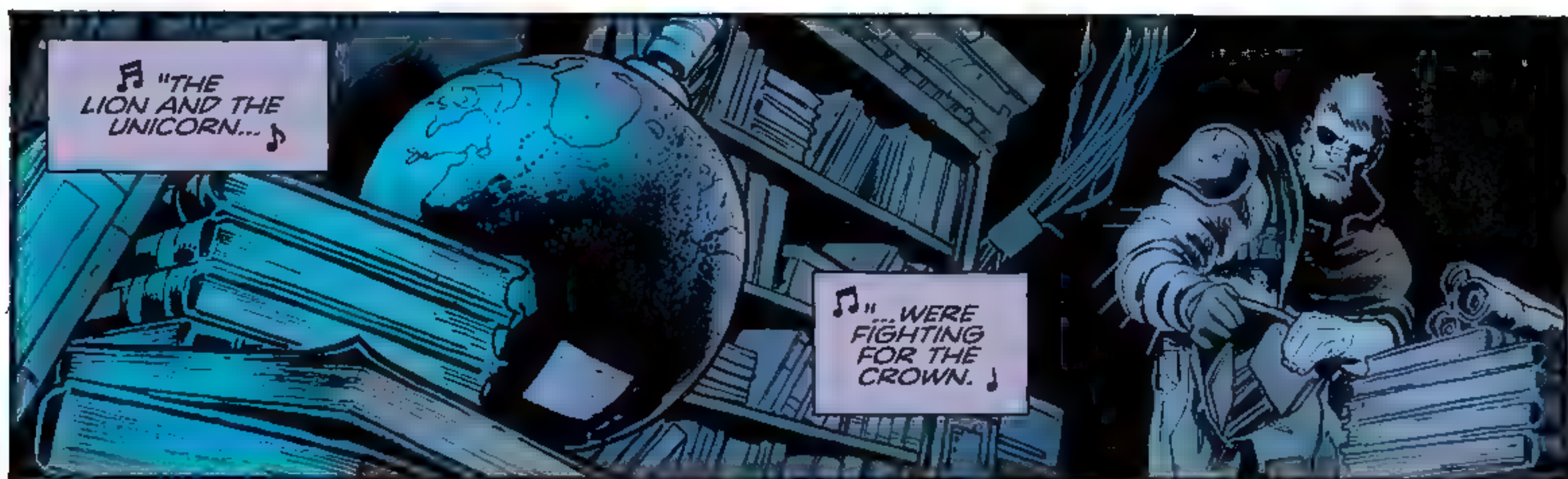
She was a warrior--part beacon light, part arson fire. But now, she says, the people need a FUTURE, not a weapon.

No one really knows how much she gave, how much she LOST, to make all this happen. The mask LIBERATED us, but it CHANGED her. I don't think all those voices, those ghosts, went away entirely.

And so she comes HERE. Every day. The little gravesite she's made for Opal... and she tends it with great care.

And Anzio and I are expecting her for dinner tonight.

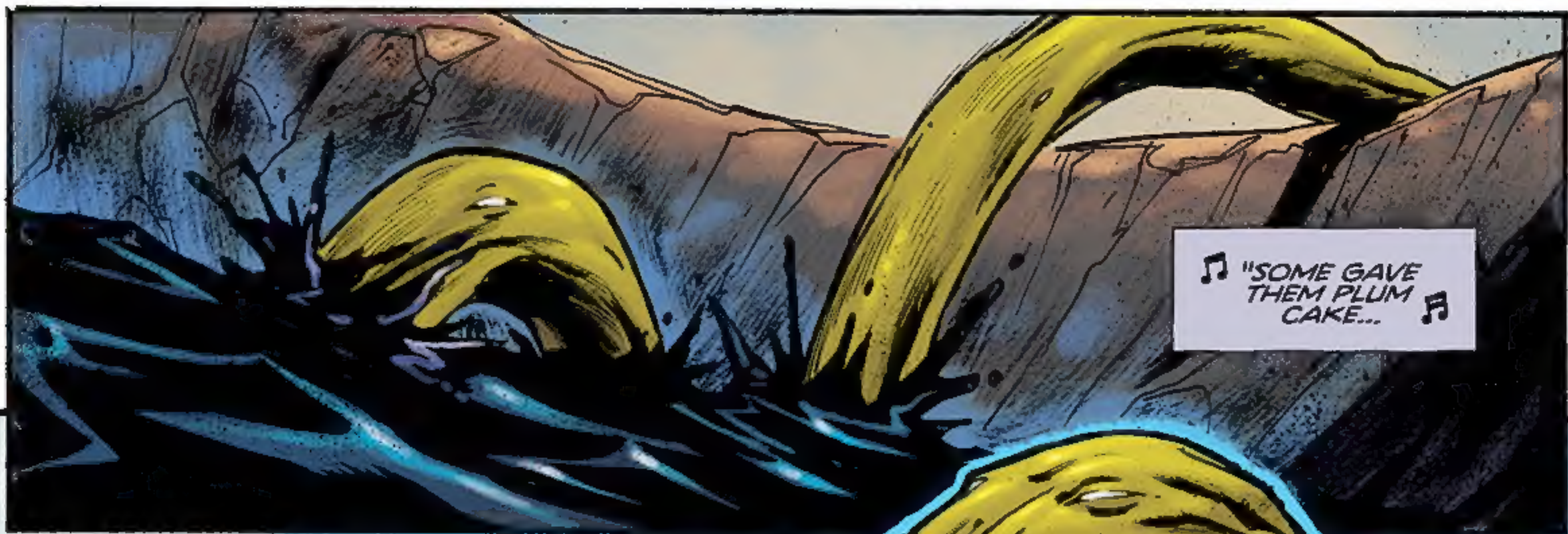




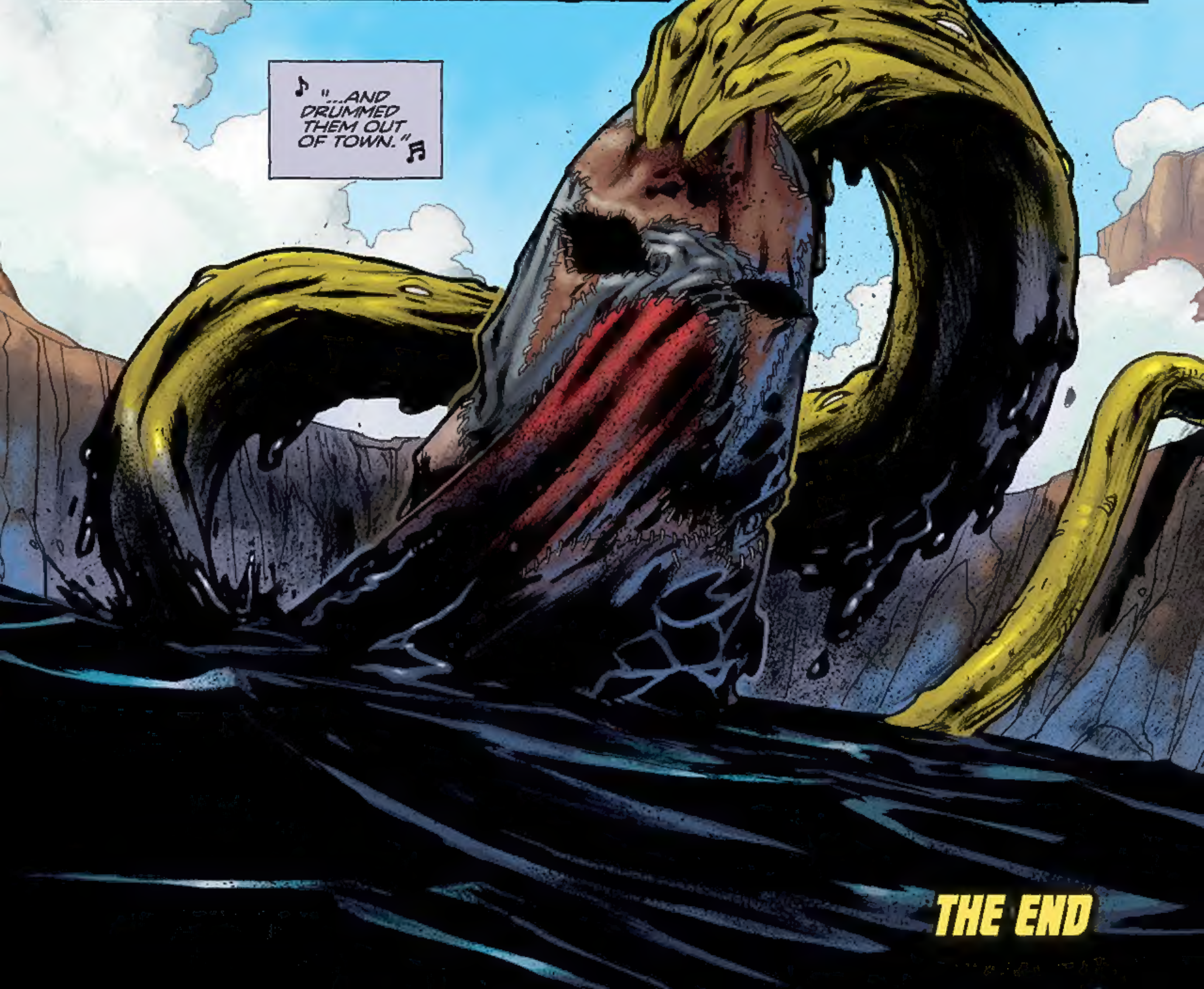




♪ "SOME GAVE  
THEM WHITE  
BREAD, SOME  
GAVE THEM  
BROWN." ♪



♪ "SOME GAVE  
THEM PLUM  
CAKE..." ♪



♪ "...AND  
DRUMMED  
THEM OUT  
OF TOWN." ♪

**THE END**



# THE SHADOW REBEL READER

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WRITE TO US AT: THE SHADOW REBEL READER  
C/O DARK HORSE COMICS, 10956 SE MAIN STREET, MILWAUKIE, OR 97222

To learn more about the world of *Orchid* and be entered to win exclusive prizes, text **ORCHID** to **738674**. You don't have to buy a thing; we're just eager to explore innovative ways of bringing readers closer to the stories by providing unique content, news, and prizes.

Well, Shadow Rebels, that's a wrap!

Over the course of the past twelve issues, Team Orchid has pored over dozens of script drafts, a slew of sketches, tons of inked pages, occasional art patches, numerous coloring takes, handfuls of lettering proofs, and a plethora of design page proofs. Hours upon hours of work have all come to fruition over the days, weeks, and months of the past year and a half to two years, not to mention the time spent brainstorming and working on initial designs before that! It's been a hell of a journey, but in the end, we did it, and now you've read the entire, massive, epic saga of *Orchid*—all 291 pages of it! Oh, and don't forget all that extra work Tom put in composing music for his comic debut so that *Orchid* could be a treat for the ears, as well as the eyes and the imagination!

That said, we couldn't have done it without you guys—the fans! Whether in this letter column or at convention signings at Comic-Con International in San Diego or New York Comic Con, your support for *Orchid* was and is greatly appreciated. Thanks so very, very much!

And now, a word from the creative team . . .

*I'd like to thank Scott, Jim, Sierra, Dave, Dan, Nate, Massimo, Mike, Jack, Anthony, Gerard, and the whole Dark Horse family for helping to bring Orchid to life. This project has really been a labor of love and a truly great and memorable experience for me. And a special huge THANK YOU to Orchid fans around the globe. Brothers and sisters, the wheel of history is in your hands!*

Tom Morello

*Thanks to all the readers who have followed Orchid from troubled teen to vengeance incarnate over the last twelve issues. This has been the most rewarding and exciting project I've had in my career, not to mention the most viscera filled. How many types of blood splatter are there, anyway? There's seven. Trust me. I know because Tom Morello doesn't pull punches, and I thank him for it.*

*Thank you as well to Dave Land, Sierra Hahn, Jim Gibbons, and all of the Dark Horse crew for trusting me with this book, and undoubtedly correcting the grammar in this very message. Dan Jackson deserves more than thank you for making me look so good with so little time to spare, so whatever you're drinking, I'm buying.*

*Goodbye for now. With any luck, Tom will dream up (nightmare up?) future tales in the world of Orchid, but give him some time to catch his breath. That guy works too hard for a rock legend. Have I mentioned I'm friends with Tom Morello?*

Long live Yehzu!  
Scott Hepburn

From all of us here at Dark Horse, a big, big thank you to Tom for bringing his unique world to us. Thanks to Tom and Scott for working tirelessly to bring this world and this book to life! Thanks to Dan Jackson and Nate Piekos for always turning in stellar colors and lettering with insane speed. And I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the stellar production and design efforts of Matt Dyer and Dave Nestelle here at DH HQ, as well as the contributions of editors Sierra Hahn, Dave Land, and Patrick Thorpe. This book was a team effort. Big thanks to all!

If the end of *Orchid* leaves you needing a new comics fix, check out Brian Wood's postapocalyptic *The Massive*, which explores what it means to be an environmentalist after the world has ended, or look to our adaptations of Guillermo del Toro and Chuck Hogan's *The Strain* (soon to be a TV show on FX!) and *The Fall*, which deal with a vampiric plague that infects New York.

And don't forget, you can get the *Orchid* saga in collected format! Volumes 1 and 2 are on sale now, and volume 3 will be in stores soon!

JIM

Jim Gibbons  
Editor



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FOR MORE DETAILS, VISIT [NIGHTWATCHMANMUSIC.COM](http://NIGHTWATCHMANMUSIC.COM).

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